

The following message was received from his Excellency the Governor:

EXECUTIVE OFFICE,  
Austin, March 21, 1891.

To the Honorable Senate of the Texas Legislature:

Impelled by considerations I hope may be deemed worthy the high standing of our State, I must declare to your honorable body that I disapprove Senate bill No. 298, entitled "An act to authorize and empower the superintendent of the State penitentiaries of Texas to receive from the treasurer of the United States, in the name of the State of Texas, the bounty on sugar raised and manufactured on the State penitentiary convict farms in Texas," passed by the Legislature less than ten days ago.

In returning it to your honorable body where it originated, I submit the following as my reasons therefor:

The object of the bill is sufficiently expressed in the title to indicate its perversion of a fundamental principle in the maintenance of which alone can free institutions be preserved; and the methods by which the tempting fruit is to be gathered at so great a sacrifice imports humiliation to a proud state, if pursued, that must lead her to ignominy. It requires the state of Texas through the superintendent of penitentiaries to file notice with the commissioner of internal revenue of the United States of the place of producing sugar cane and the manufacture of sugar on state convict farms for and on her account, together with a general description of machinery and methods to be employed in the manufacture of sugar. An estimate of the amount of sugar proposed to be produced by said state for the current or next ensuing year, to make application for license to produce sugar, to execute good and sufficient bond as provided by the laws of the United States governing such matters, to make application for the bounty on sugar and to receive from and receipt for it to the United States government.

The State has a sugar farm worked by convict labor, and it would seem that under an act passed by the last Congress she could get from the United States government two cents a pound as a premium on all sugar produced on it. The bill under discussion simply gives her the authority, by complying with the law of Congress, to accept the gratuity for the sugar. It in no way affects the rights

of individuals. The question therefore is: Should the State take the "bounty?" My conviction is that it should not. To do so would commit her to an iniquitous precedent based on the policy of favoritism to the few, at the expense of the many, which in time must lead to the government's destruction unless changed.

The law under which this "bounty" is offered by the United States is entitled "An act to reduce the revenue and equalize duties on imports, and for other purposes." By it the producer is required to apply, for and procure a license from, and give bond to the Commissioner of Internal Revenue, conditioned for the faithful observance of all the rules and regulations to be prescribed by the commissioner for the manufacture and protection of sugar. Besides being empowered to make the rules and regulations governing that industry, the said commissioner is required to "exercise supervision and inspection of the manufacture" of sugar. While to my mind the act is clearly unconstitutional, and, without reference to the organic law, is void and would be so held by a circumspect court, as Congress has seen fit to pass it, I shall base my action herein on other grounds.

The state is sovereign of her own affairs and cannot be disturbed in the legitimate exercise of her prerogatives. If she desires to raise sugar by convict labor, under no circumstances could she with propriety ask or accept from any government a license to do so; nor could she yield to a supervision of her affairs by any officer not subordinate to her own laws. To do so in one instance would lead to another, and finally to supervision by the Federal government over the cotton patches, wheat fields, stock ranches, lumber yards and factories within her limits. Precedents by government usurpations become stronger than law. The worse they are, the more difficult to overthrow. When they are erected on the destruction of the Constitution, like this "bounty" act, the wrong which produced them strengthens as the fruits of the crime spread until they become fastened forever on the people.

There can be no more reason to support a bounty on sugar than on cotton, grain, tobacco or stock. Two cents a pound offered by the government is but the beginning. It is only a precedent. Let it stand and there

must be a premium also on every article produced within the United States. With the premium goes the license; and coupled on to the license follows Federal supervision. So will end the last vestige of state sovereignty. For my part I shall protest and begin to strike now while the precedent is new. For no sum can the State afford to sacrifice principle, nor to imperil her sovereign rights. At best, our form of government is fast changing, not by the exercise of the inherent and inalienable right of the people in their sovereign capacity, but by the abuse of the taxing power on the part of congress in support of its lavish bounties to the favored classes who are able to lobby around it for spoils.

It is hardly decent to suppose that no measure is too monstrous for popular credulity when it embraces a proposition to dispense money under the name of "bounty" among the citizens. Insidious and deceptive as such methods usually are, no one can deny that at the heart of them there is corruption. It consists of the government collecting money to the impoverishment of the masses by which to gratify the greed of favorite classes. Tolerant of it by a free people finds support only in their ignorance. Lay bare the truth so they can understand it, and their self-respect and honesty will support the hand that it strikes down.

It is a cardinal principle of the Democratic party, often publicly declared, that it is the duty of every branch of government to enforce and practice the most rigid economy in conducting public affairs; and that no more revenue ought to be raised than is required to defray the necessary expenses of the government, and for the gradual but certain extinction of the public debt.

The example and influence of Texas, standing as she does a prominent factor in this great party, ought to be arrayed on the side of this principle. In proportion to her prominence in support of such principles, the important, sacred duty devolving on her is increased to jealousy guard and maintain them. Resistance of all monopolies and exclusive legislation, for the benefit of the few at the expense of the many, in obedience to the will of the people, comports with her untarnished record and cannot fail to mark the course of her future except at the

sacrifice of her honor and sovereignty as a State.

Respectfully,

J. S. Hogg,  
Governor of Texas.